

Tell It to Me Straight Dinner

Four IDJC-Lewiston juveniles participated in the "Tell It to Me Straight" event on Monday, April 11, held in Kamiah, Idaho. The juveniles were commended for their participation in the event. Comments from facilitators included how respectful the juveniles were, how attentive they were, how helpful they were with parents' questions and concerns about their own children, and how much they offered to help with the tasks assigned and even volunteering to clean afterwards.

The following is an article from Kamiah Community Partners Coalition:

The Kamiah Community Partners Coalition (KCPC) held a one of a kind event Monday night at the Kamiah Welcome Center.

The "Tell It to Me Straight Dinner" provided parents an opportunity to gain new insights, skills and approaches to open the lines of communication with their children.

The event was facilitated by John J. Beranek. John has worked with teens for seven years on this project. Working with teens throughout the country he is often sought after to inspire, motivate or re-energize teens, youth groups or entire communities. As a former corrections official he has now been a private consultant/motivational speaker for thirteen years. The Idaho State Department of Education partnered with KCPC to bring John to Kamiah by paying his speaking fee.

"I really enjoyed coming to Kamiah. This is a nice community and there are some really great folks here that care about the families and the youth in the area." John Beranek

Thanks to the Nez Perce Tribal Meth and Suicide Prevention Task Force, a wonderful FREE dinner was served to the twenty parents that came. The event was open to all parents of youth in the 7th -12th grade.

"We could not offer amazing programs like the "Tell It to Me Straight Dinner" in Kamiah if it was not for organizations like the Department of Education and the Nez Perce Tribal Meth and Suicide Prevention Task Force joining us to cover the expenses. The success of tonight's event was very much a team effort" said Sharlene Johnson, Executive Director of KCPC.

The dinner event allowed these parents to ask the real questions they have always wanted to ask. In turn they heard ideas, through teen eyes, on when, how and what approach to take with their own kids. Because of the participation of many local teens from the KCPC Youth Focus Group and the local S.A.D.D. Chapter, the night was a great success.

A Kamiah High School senior stated "This dinner was like a parent walking around in the dark, and they finally found the flashlight." Another senior from KHS was "surprised parents really wanted to talk about sex, this dinner was very informational for teens AND parents, I feel we all grew through the process."

Many topics were discussed from "the talk" to bullying, underage drinking and driving, even Internet

safety and sex-ting. A sophomore at Kamiah High School "wasn't expecting to learn anything, but I actually learned something I can use." Parents in attendance were surprised at what they heard.

Christina Richardson stated "It was very interesting to hear honest answers to my questions from the teenagers. I was surprised at some of the feedback I got from them; it made me see some things from a different viewpoint." "It was an eye opening experience that all parents should be a part of," stated Hanna Krieger, another parent in attendance.

Sharlene Johnson said "The wonderful thing about an opportunity like this is we are able to cut through all of the "stuff" and just get back to the basics. All parents want what is best for their kids and all parents have a hard time now and again with communication. Being a parent is hard work, and this event allowed parents to relax over a nice meal and realize they are not alone facing the challenges of raising children in today's changing society. " Janae Gunn from Kamiah High school expressed "I hope parents will take home this information and really use it."